

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE

AT THE MOMENT OF VICTORY.

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CHAPTER X.

THE storm was a dry one; it broke in its full fury almost immediately after Madge and Lance got back to the house. They had scampered up the steep garden paths as if pursued by the storm-fiend himself, and Madge had to stand a good three minutes just within the hall-door to get her breath back.

"Get away from the trees, Madge," he had said, catching her arm and pulling her along at a fine pace.

Well, she could easily understand his anxiety that they should be under shelter from the storm. What she could not understand was his haste to rush out into it again. It is true he shouted to her as he disappeared in the outside darkness: "I've forgotten something, I shall be back in a minute." But that something ought to have been of great importance to necessitate such a headlong rush into what threatened to be one of the worst storms the country-side had known for years.

Lance's seemingly eccentric conduct, however, admitted of an easy explanation. When he had peered among the reeds and water-flags as his boat shot past, he had thought he saw the flutter of a grey skirt, whose wearer it was easy to identify.

Madge had read easily enough the forlornness which Miss Shore's white face and stony manner expressed. Lance had read the forlornness, and something else beside. A mood half-desperate, half-defiant, which might possibly find for

itself a desperate means of ending a hopeless life.

It was this thought that speeded his feet through the storm to the water's edge once more.

But when he got down there among the sedges and willows, not a soul was to be seen. A startled bird flew from out a marshy hollow with a sharp cry; a solitary frog croaked a dismal note of warning; an ominous breeze, rippling the dark surface of the water, set the reeds bending and whispering together. Other sound there was none.

Something glittering at the bottom of the little boat they had just quitted caught his eye. Picking it up, he saw that it was the bracelet which Madge had unclasped as she had paddled in the stream.

A brilliant flash of lightning cleft the inky clouds over his head, and for one brief moment the whole night-hidden landscape stood revealed.

Old Cuddaw crowned it, standing out bold, bleak, and bare against the leaden sky. Below, the castle showed a grey solid block of masonry with every turret and gable sharply defined. Lower still the valley lay, a dim expanse of waving, shadowy trees, out of which crept a white, stony path, leading with many a wind up to the fells.

It seemed less like one grand expanse of scenery thus laid bare to view than a combination of two landscapes, the one belonging to the sky, the other to the earth beneath.

In that brief, vivid illumination, Lance saw something else beside the sky picture and the dim valley with its upward-winding path—the figure of a woman in a long flowing cloak in that path, making her way rapidly towards the mountains.

It did not need a second flash of lightning to tell him who that woman was. But what her motive could be in thus daring the storm on those mountain heights was not so easy to discover.

He thought with dismay of the slippery mountain paths, the shelving ledges, the holes, and gaping precipices. He who had known them from boyhood would yet have hesitated to dare their dangers on a moonless night. And there was she—a woman, a stranger, without guide or light—making for them with straight and rapid steps, which implied purpose and design.

His course was clear to him. A shorter way led out of the valley than the one she was following; it intersected the former path at the point where the mountain ascent began. By using his utmost despatch he might intercept her at that point, and succeed in inducing her to take shelter in a sandy hollow beneath the over-arching rocks, which, in his boyish days, had been a favourite play-place for him—his "Crusoe's cave."

It was not possible to make swift headway through the woody moorland which lay between him and this haven of refuge. The darkness was increasing with every step he took. Overhead the thunder crashed with a bewildering rapidity, every peal prolonged to twice its length by the mountain echoes, till from east to west, from west to east, the heavens seemed one vast plain of rolling artillery.

He hailed the bright, scintillating lightnings as he would have hailed a friendly lantern. They showed him the briar and tangle in his path, the big stumbling-blocks of boulders, the pitfalls of disused gravel-pits. They showed him also, when at length he reached the "Crusoe's cave," Miss Shore's slender figure standing about thirty feet above his head on the overlapping ledge.

Whatever she was or was not, one thing was certain: she must be a practised mountaineer, or she could never have reached even this moderate height in safety.

"How much higher is she going?" thought Lance. Then, making one vigorous effort in the pauses of the thunder, he shouted to her at the top of his voice, calling her by name, entreating her to wait for him, so that he might take her to a place of safety.

There came an awful flash of lightning at this moment, which seemed to spend its fiercest strength on the very ledge of rock on which she stood.

Lance, half-blinded, looking upwards, saw the girl standing motionless, while the lightning seemed literally to smite the ground at her very feet. Then came the terrific, resonant thunder, then the inky, bewildering darkness closed in upon the mountain-side once more.

Half-stunned, as well as half-blinded, Lance made his way up the stony path which lay between him and Miss Shore; his heart, stout as it was, quailing at the thought of the sight that might greet his eyes as the dire result of Nature's cruelly expended forces.

But no sight more dire than that of Miss Shore leaning against the bulging side of the rock met his view as he rounded the path. She might have been carved out of the rock itself for the motionlessness and rigidity of her outline. The hood of her grey cloak had fallen from her head; her bandeau of black hair had uncoiled, and hung in a long black line on one side of her ashen-white face; her eyes were round and staring.

She did not turn her head at his approach, merely pointed to the ground at her feet, where the quick thunderbolt had literally split the rock.

"Did you see that?" she asked, under her breath, in an awe-stricken voice.

"See it!" cried Lance. "Who could help seeing it? Thank Heaven you are safe—don't waste a moment, take my hand. I'll get you down into a place of safety."

But the girl did not stir. "Would that have killed any one else?" she asked, in the same slow, suppressed voice as before.

"Why, of course not, or else it must have killed you," answered Lance, trying to laugh off what seemed to him a stupefying terror on her part. "You see I wasn't far behind you, and I wasn't hurt. Come, make haste into shelter; we don't know what the next flash may do."

His last words were lost in the crash of another peal.

But it was farther off now. The storm had evidently spent the worst of its fury. The dense sky parted; light clouds went travelling across it, carried by the upper current.

Still the girl did not stir.

"My mother said on her death-bed," she said, and now her foreign accent became more markedly apparent, "that not poison, nor flood, nor fire, can kill those who are to die by the hand of man." It was said slowly and absently, with eyes not looking at Lance, but beyond him.

"Poison, flood, fire!" All in a moment there seemed to be revealed to Lance a terrible reason for the emptied glass beside the bed, for the crouching figure among the water-reeds, for the bare-headed defiance of the lightning on the mountain.

Debonair and light-hearted to the last degree, it cost him an effort to shut his eyes to the horror of the whole thing, and to say in an easy, commonplace voice: "Never mind about that; the thing is now to get into a place of safety. Come."

She looked at him steadily for a moment. "Yes, I will come," she said slowly. "Fate is stronger than I."

She did not take his hand; she walked slowly beside him with head bent, and eyes fixed on the ground.

There was no need to seek the refuge of the "Crusoe's cave." Overhead, the light clouds parting showed a faint rift of light from a young moon; far away in the distance the thunder was dying hard in a succession of low, sonorous growls.

But few words passed between them on their way back. Lance thanked heaven when they stood within the Castle grounds once more. Miss Shore seemed tired and dazed; her voice was weak, her footsteps dragged.

Lights were more conspicuous in the upper than in the lower rooms as they approached the house. One long French window of the library left unshuttered and unbarred, gave them easy and unnoted entrance.

"She ought to be locked in her room at night," thought Lance, as he said his good-night to his companion at the foot of the stairs.

"Oh, Lance," said Madge, coming out of the drawing-room a moment after, "where have you been? How white you look! We were just talking about sending out a party of men with torches and umbrellas in search of you."

Lance tossed her bracelet to her. "A golden reason for risking a wetting," he said laughingly, and then vanished forthwith before she had time to frame a second question.

CHAPTER XL

MADGE, bent on keeping down the growth of her prejudices, did not forget her promise to Lance, and the morning after the storm saw her seated in Miss Shore's room doing her best to win that young lady's confidence, with the bene-

volent hope of finding a pretext for inducing her to prolong her stay at the Castle.

It was uphill work, however. Miss Shore seemed bent on playing the part of a fertilising shower to Madge's prejudices, for rebuff after rebuff did she deal to her kindly overtures.

Miss Shore had not made her appearance at the breakfast-table on the morning after the storm. Her breakfast had been taken to her in her own room, together with the morning's paper, for which she had once more sent down a special request.

"You are interested in politics—in the foreign news?" asked Madge by way of making a beginning, and noting that Miss Shore had folded the paper with the Continental news uppermost.

She started.

"I care for foreign news! Why should I? It is nothing to me," she answered almost fiercely.

Madge felt that she had somehow made a wrong start.

"One naturally likes to have news of one's own country when away from it," she said apologetically.

"Country!" cried Miss Shore, flushing scarlet, "this is my country; I have no other."

Madge felt bewildered.

"But—but," she stammered, "you are not English, surely. Are you not Italian? You gave me the impression of being Italian."

"I am not Italian; I am English. My father was English; I am English. Hear how I speak!"

Evidently she was ignorant how markedly foreign her accent was.

"I am sorry," said Madge frankly. "I was hoping that you might be Italian, and that—that we might have studied the language together. I am so wishing to be a fluent linguist."

She did not like to say: "I was hoping that you would be able to give me some lessons in Italian, for which I might have paid you a guinea an hour." She could only hope that her meaning would gradually dawn on her languid listener.

The meaning, however, did not seem to dawn, so Madge went on again:

"I am wanting to improve myself in all sorts of ways. I sometimes feel that I am very much behind other people in accomplishments. I want to get some good teaching in singing—I am particularly fond of singing. Do you sing?"

"I do not."

"Dear me, this is unpromising!" thought Madge. "There's one thing she certainly couldn't give me lessons in — courtesy. What shall I try next? Ah!—Perhaps you play on the piano or on the violin?"

"I do not know a note of music."

"Really?"

There came a long pause.

Miss Shore folded her newspaper with the advertisements outside, but still kept it tightly in her hand.

Madge looked out of the window. The storm of over-night had disturbed the weather; the air was full of a vapoury heaviness through which the mountains showed black against a leaden sky.

Those mountains suggested an idea:

"I do so wish I had devoted more time to art before I married! I would give anything if I could paint those mountains—that sky. Of course you can paint!"

"I can."

Madge's spirits went up.

"How I envy you——" she began, but then stopped.

She did not care, with other interests growing upon her, to volunteer for a long course of painting lessons; that would mean at least three hours daily in Miss Shore's company.

Another idea suggested itself.

"I don't mean flower-painting or portrait-painting; I mean can you sketch scenery—mountains, and lakes, and valleys?"

"I hate the mountains," she said with slow, suppressed bitterness.

"Hate the mountains! Well, even if you hate them, that needn't prevent your being able to paint them," said Madge, beginning to lose patience a little.

"I can paint them. I have painted mountains grander than these." She broke off a moment, then added, as if she were compelling herself to a course which was advisable rather than attractive: "Do you wish me to paint these mountains for you?"

"That's it—the very thing," cried Madge, drawing a long breath of relief. "I have been wanting, for a long time, to decorate a little room downstairs, which I occupy sometimes, with a set of water-colour sketches." (This was a fib, but Madge was at her wits' ends.) "It was my boudoir before I married, and now Sir Peter is good enough to have it refurnished for me. If I could get six or eight pictures

of Cumberland scenery hung round it, I should feel it decorated at once."

"Six or eight! There," thought Madge, "she can take just as long as ever she likes over them, and I will pay her whatever she asks me for them. And if Lance isn't satisfied with my morning's work, I don't know what will please him."

"I will paint them if you wish it," said Miss Shore, and then she looked at the door as if she had endured Madge's company long enough.

Madge rose instantly.

"Is your room comfortable? Have you all you want here?" she asked, looking round as she so often did when welcoming Lady Judith's guests to the Castle.

Both looking-glasses were pushed into a corner now, both turned face to the wall.

Miss Shore followed Madge's gaze towards that corner.

"They were in my way. I pushed them there," she said coldly, in a tone that prevented further questioning.

Madge felt that she had earned the thanks which Lance accorded to her, when, later on in the day, she contrived to inform him of her plan to put a little money into Miss Shore's purse.

"I must admit that she is not a taking young woman," she said. "I never felt myself so chilled and repressed in my life before."

The seriousness Lance put into his answer startled her.

"Madge, I do believe," he said, "that that poor girl has had some terrible experience. I never before in my life saw human eyes with such a hunted, desolate look in them."

"It's wonderful," said Sir Peter, coming into the room at that moment, "how much one can get through between sunrise and sundown, if one only sets to work with a will!"

"Wonderful!" echoed Lance, his seriousness gone in a moment, like a ghost at the cock's crow, and getting up and opening a door on the opposite side of the room, in order that Sir Peter might have free egress whenever he felt so disposed.

Sir Peter had been in a particularly lively frame of mind during the past few days, and Mr. Stubbs had had rather a busy time of it, owing to his patron's wish to re-model every one of the charities on whose committee-list his name figured. The letter-bag had gone out stuffed every night, yet Sir Peter's brain appeared to be brimming over with ideas.

"I have a splendid scheme on hand just now," he said, thoroughly content now that he had succeeded in breaking the thread of Lance's and Madge's talk, and had concentrated their attention entirely on himself. "A splendid scheme! A little vast—a little vague at present, perhaps."

"Ah," echoed Lance again; "a little vast, a little vague!"

"But what of that? In my schemes I must be vast, or I am nothing. The fault of one-half of the schemes of charity submitted to me, is that they are microscopic. I say to Stubbs every morning of my life, 'Double, treble, quadruple the proportions of that project, then I will look at it.' But I must have elbow-room—elbow-room in all I undertake." Here he lifted his elbows in the air with an upward wing-like motion.

"Ah, elbow-room, of course," said Lance, also executing the wing-like movement with his elbows.

Sir Peter made one turn round the room, and came back again.

"The truth of it is," he said, lowering his voice, and looking over his shoulder, "that if it were not for Lady Judith I should by this time have won for myself the reputation of an universal——"

"Provider?" suggested Lance.

"Benefactor," finished the old gentleman, not understanding the allusion. "But as it is"—here a deep-drawn sigh—"when I would soar on wings like a bird," here he again executed the upward wing-like movement, "Lady Judith brings me down to earth again, and I feel myself nothing more than a kite with a string attached to it."

Then he pulled out his watch.

"What, half-past twelve is it? And I have had no exercise to-day. Ah! I must be off for a little stretch in the park."

"There is a case of foot-and-mouth disease at Lower Upton," said Lady Judith, entering the room by the door by which Sir Peter was about to quit it.

She was fanning herself vigorously. Sir Peter backed into the room before her. Her robust handling of her fan might have conveyed the impression that she had fanned him back again over the threshold.

Now that the husband and wife were together in the room, Madge thought it would be a splendid opportunity to get their combined sanction to the little plan she had just been detailing to Lance respecting Miss Shore.

She accordingly, in a key sufficiently loud to reach Lady Judith's ear, asked Sir Peter's consent to it.

Sir Peter's face grew rosy with pleasure.

"The very thing! the very thing!" he cried, rubbing his hands gleefully. "I told you, Lance, that if Madge were only consulted on the matter, she would arrange it all easily enough! And you said——"

"No, I didn't," said Lance, apprehensive of what was coming, and not at all pleased that Madge should know that he and Sir Peter had beforehand taken counsel together on the matter.

"Well, I said I have a hundred plans for——"

"Ah! I dare say you said that," interrupted Lance, bent on preventing further disclosures.

Lady Judith unintentionally became his ally.

"Is she to be a permanence in the house? That's what I want to know," she asked in her highest key, her fan once more with its backward motion stirring the air as much for Sir Peter as for herself. "And am I expected to take her in hand, and be a sort of Providence to her?"

Sir Peter slipped behind her, retreating backwards towards the door.

"No, no, my dear, nothing of the sort; don't trouble yourself. Madge will take all responsibility on her own shoulders, I'm sure."

Lady Judith turned on him, executing the double action with her fan once more.

She caught the word responsibility only.

"Yes, it is a responsibility, and I admit, if I am to have responsibilities, that I would sooner they should be of my own choosing. There was the last gardener's boy you sent home—wretched little being! He had lost a thumb, and was horribly bow-legged, and I remember you said to me: 'Nice little fellow! Can't you put him into page's livery, and make something of him?'"

"My dear, I have no wish for you to put Miss Shore into page's livery, I assure you," said Sir Peter, making a feeble effort to make the situation comic, but getting at the same time a step or two nearer the door.

Lady Judith fanned him on another step or two.

"And the last stable-boy you brought home from London had such a diabolical squint, that he could only see the time by turning his back on the clock and getting a glimpse of it over the top of his ear. Yet you said to me: 'First-rate lad that! find him something to do at the farm!'"

But she had fairly fanned Sir Peter on to the door-mat now, and had to appeal to Lance and Madge as audience.

They, however, through long practice, were able to continue undisturbed their own subjects of conversation under the immediate fire of her oratory.

THE LAND OF THE PINK PEARL.

UNDER this very attractive name is sometimes known a not very flourishing portion of Her Majesty's dominions, with which our American cousins are better acquainted than stay-at-home English people. But in the revived interest in West Indian affairs, partly caused by the commotion in sugar, and partly by Mr. Froude's recent book, it is desirable that the Land of the Pink Pearl should not be lost sight of. It has lately found an illustrator in Mr. L. D. Powles, ex-circuit Justice of the Bahama Islands; but it is to be regretted that Mr. Powles has not given to the world more of actual description and less of personal grievance than his book contains.

The Bahamas are very much of an unknown country, even to the West Indians themselves. "Why waste your time in writing about the Bahama Islands?" said a West Indian merchant to Mr. Powles. "We in the West Indies know no more about the Bahamas than we do about an Irish village." Mr. Froude not only did not visit them—he never even mentions them in his book. There is no steam communication between them and the other West Indian islands, and the mails are mostly transmitted by way of New York, with which place there is a regular line of tourist steamers.

Yet, while there is so much scope here for an energetic globe-trotter, so persistent a recorder of incidents of travel as Mr. J. J. Aubertin, who since his "Flight to Mexico" has had "A Fight with Distances" in the New World, and who was in the Bahamas last year, only gives one page out of three hundred and fifty in his last volume to these interesting islands. True, he was only at Nassau, the capital, and he was ill all the time; but what an opportunity for book-making he has missed!

That which first rivets one's attention on the Bahamas is the fact—or at least the extreme probability—that they were the first discovered portion of the New World.

San Salvador, now called Cat Island, is believed to be the first land which Columbus sighted after his adventurous and memorable voyage from Europe.

At any rate, this San Salvador, or Cat Island, is one of the finest in some respects of the whole group. It comprises some hundred and two thousand four hundred acres, supporting a population of about four thousand two hundred and thirty persons, and in the slave days was famous for its flourishing plantations. But with the abolition of slavery, the prosperity of the Bahamas has declined, and the chief exports are now various varieties of fruit, but chiefly pineapples and bananas. Cat Island is shaped very much like Italy, and is about sixty miles long by four broad. As in the slave days great numbers of cattle were reared here, there seems no reason why this industry should not be revived, for the island is reputed to be eminently suitable for cattle and horse breeding.

The total area of the numerous islands and islets forming the Bahamian Group is about five thousand eight hundred square miles; and, in 1886, the total population was forty-seven thousand two hundred and eighty, of whom about four-fifths were blacks.

But there is a great difference in the character of the islands. Some are mere barren rocks, and others are densely clothed with vegetation, including thick woods of mahogany, satinwood, lignum-vitæ, cedar, and pine.

New Providence is not one of the largest, but it contains the capital, Nassau; and it was occupied by the English so long ago as 1629, which was just one hundred and thirty-seven years after Columbus had discovered the group. They have changed hands several times since.

The Spaniards drove us out in 1641; we returned in 1666; the Spaniards again turned us out in 1703; and, finally, the islands were formally ceded to us in 1783. They have not been a very rich possession, and for several years had to be supported by a Government subsidy. But that was after the plantations "gave out" with the abolition of slave labour.

In physical formation the Bahama Islands are coralline, and are surrounded by rocks and shoals. The northernmost is quite close to the coast of Florida, and the group takes a sort of curve south-eastward nearly down to Hayti.

The Spaniards called the group "Lucayos," from "Los Cayos," or "the keys;"

but "Cayos" also seems to signify "low rocks."

Generally speaking, the soil on these low rocks is thin but rich. It is said that in planting cocoa-nuts, the natives used to excavate a hole in the rock and then fill it with earth to form a bed for the tree, but we cannot vouch for the truth of the statement. It seems, however, a fact that the natives made more out of the sea than they did off the land, for they were notorious wreckers, and have prospered on the spoil of many a goodly and richly-laden craft in days past. They had an evil reputation in this respect, and it is asserted that wrecks were regularly planned between them and dishonest seamen, for mutual profit. Even now they carry on a considerable business in "salvage" work, but as salvors they require to carry a license from the Governor.

But last century the Bahamas were just as much a nest of pirates as were the Sulus in the Pacific.

The people seem to have returned, as far as they dared, to old practices after "emancipation" had caused the plantations to be abandoned, and the houses of the once rich whites to be left to ruin and decay. Mr. Powles says:

"For many years after emancipation, a great deal of money was brought into the colony by systematic wrecking. Hurricanes, shoals, reefs, and shifting banks seem to have conspired to place these waters amongst the most dangerous in the world. One might, therefore, have imagined that they would produce a harvest of wrecks plentiful enough, without adventitious aid. But the greed of the Bahamian native was not so easily satisfied. Every year one or other of the Nassau merchants went on a foreign trip, and shortly after his return a vessel was wrecked somewhere on the Bahama banks, abandoned as a total loss, and all its materials and salvage stock sold off in Nassau, to the gain of the island of New Providence, and the immense loss of the unhappy underwriters, for she was invariably heavily insured."

Now, however, lighthouses and a system of regulations have been established, which have reduced wrecking to a minimum.

But, what with wrecking and then with blockade-running during the American war, the Bahamians neglected agriculture, and, as nobody took the emancipated slaves in hand, a large portion of the land fell out of cultivation, and became practically valueless.

The native whites are not called "Creoles," as in other parts of the West Indies, but "Conchs"—from a mollusc, which is one of the commonest and most useful natural products of the islands. It has a very handsome shell, which is largely bought by visitors, and which is also used as a horn, for forming the foundation of wharves and piers, and for innumerable other purposes. The flesh is largely used both for food and for bait; and imbedded in the flesh is found the pink pearl, which gives the fancy name to the Bahamas.

Sometimes these pearls are of great size, and of immense value; but the finding of them is a pure lottery.

The human "Conchs," however, do not seem to be either very useful or very ornamental. They are all more or less connected by marriage or descent, and they form a sort of "family" which monopolises all the good things in the colony, and steadfastly resists all interference with usage and vested interests.

Their contempt for "coloured people" is extreme, and the blacks are ground down and oppressed by them in a manner which Mr. Powles characterises as "a disgrace to the British flag."

The coloured people live quite apart, and in settlements of their own, where they retain the African tribal distinctions, and are divided into Yourabas, Egbas, Congos, etc. Some of them elect annually a Queen, whose will is law on certain matters. They are fond of dancing and pictures, and have many festivals; but the curious thing is that they have appropriated white men's commemorations without knowing why. Thus Gay Fawkes' Day celebration would not be omitted on any account, and they solemnly carry on the fifth of November an effigy in procession with bands of music and torches, and they solemnly hang the effigy on a prepared gallows. At Christmas time, too, they break out into processions and cracker-firing to a prodigious extent. On such occasions, and on Sundays, the coloured women wear cotton dresses of blue, or pink, or white—occasionally even of silk, satin, or velveteen—with gorgeous hats, and tight white boots or shoes. On Sundays the men come out in broad-cloth and tall black hats, to purchase which they scrape and save, wholly unsuitable though they be for the climate. Their names, too, are remarkable. Prince of Wales's and Prince Alberts are innumerable. One man is called Tiberius Gracchus, another

Thaddeus de Warsaw Toots, another Duke of Wellington, another Evangelist. A favourite name at christenings of late has been observed to be Randolph Churchill. Many children, however, are named after the month or the day on which they were born, as March, July, Monday, Friday, etc. The coloured ladies rejoice in such names as Brinhilda, Clotilda, Cassandra, Malvina, Daphne, etc. Curiously enough, the surnames are nearly all Scotch, taken from the old planters.

Hymn-singing is their favourite amusement, and very curious are some of the hymns they sing.

There is much that is interesting and attractive about the coloured inhabitants of the Bahamas, and it is desirable that something should be done to relieve them from the grievous yoke of the truck system, which is galling them so sadly. This is how it works in the sponge-fishing, now the principal industry of the group. A negro applies to the owner of a craft to go on a fishing voyage. He is engaged to be paid, not by wages, but by a share of the profits of the take. The employer keeps a store, or is in partnership with somebody who keeps one, which is stocked with all the trashy rubbish that American dealers cannot find a market for elsewhere. Out of this store the negro is compelled to take all the supplies he needs, and a great deal he does not need, by way of "advance," and he is charged first-class prices for worthless goods. When he returns from his voyage, in perhaps six weeks or so, the fisherman is compelled to sell his cargo in the Sponge Exchange at Nassau, which is the only place allowed by the law for the traffic, and the Nassau merchants arrange the prices to suit themselves. Then the proceeds are divided, and the fisherman usually finds that he is in debt for his advance, and must sign articles for another voyage, to "clear himself;" but really only to get deeper into the mire. A colonial paper, indeed, says that "The truck system permeates almost the whole of the agricultural, and the sponging and turtling industries." The fishermen "have been accustomed to take up or receive commodities which they do not really need, at one price, and to dispose of them immediately afterwards at a very much lower price in order to obtain money with which to procure the commodities they really do need. This has been going on from day to day for half a century, and it is not surprising that such practical lessons

in improvidence and wastefulness have now become thoroughly learned."

It is pretty much the same with the pineapple cultivator, who is frequently a peasant-proprietor. This fruit is one of the principal exports — chiefly to the United States — but the trade is managed by the Nassau merchants, who go round every season with their packs of rubbish for barter. There are few large producers of anything in the Bahamas, and both fruit and vegetables are brought to market in small quantities. And yet there is no doubt that the islands are eminently suited for fruit-orchards on a large scale, while they are quite close to a market in the United States, which they can never over-supply. It has been pointed out that in the cultivation of onions and tomatoes alone, for the American markets, the Bahamas could make a small fortune.

But the people do not seem to rise above the pineapple, and a few oranges and bananas.

Good soil is required for the cultivation of the pineapple. It is first cleared by burning the bush, but no attempt is made to grub up the roots. The field is then planted with suckers, and the rest is left to Nature. Suckers produce no fruit until after eighteen months. At the end of that time the first crop is gathered, and with the fruit new suckers appear, growing out of the root of the plants, which develop into new plants and produce fruit the next year, while the old plant withers away.

This automatic process may go on for even six or seven years without exhausting the soil; but exhaustion does follow in time, and then the land is allowed to lie fallow and to get into bush again for fifteen or twenty years, after which it is again brought into so-called cultivation. The pineapple plant gives out other suckers just below the fruit, and these are cut off to plant new fields. Fruit intended for the English market is cut off below the suckers so as to preserve them during the voyage, but for the American market it is cut off at the base. Surely some process of fertilising, or some rotation of crops would be preferable to and more profitable than this primitive system of cultivation.

There are primitive customs, too, in the Bahamas. Thus in Dunmore Town in Harbour Island, there is no clock, but a policeman strikes the hours on a bell from seven a.m. to nine p.m. After he has struck nine, he gives three solemn final strokes, which are supposed to say, "Kiss-no-more." At any rate, after these strokes,

no one with a character to lose risks being seen in the streets. Lovers in the midst of their moonlight rambles part suddenly and fly affrighted at the sound, for flirting which five minutes before was harmless, now becomes dangerous, nay, even sinful. At the stroke of this curfew all respectable persons retreat to their own homes.

Salt used to be a great article of export from the Bahamas, but the high American tariff has now almost killed the trade. All that the sea now yields in the way of traffic is the conchs, the sponges, and the turtles already named.

But the waters surrounding the shores are full of wondrous beauty—marine gardens of the most exquisite coral bowers and grottoes, full of choicest form and most lovely colour. The "madrepora," or branching coral; the "astræa," or brain coral, the "alcyonoid polyps," or coral shrubs, and the fairy-like "algæ;" the gorgonias, and sea-fans, and the clusters of purple sea-feathers, form the most fascinating combinations beneath the transparent waters.

Nassau, which is built on the north side of the island of New Providence, is now a regular winter-resort for Americans with pulmonary complaints. The harbour is excellent and very deep. Above it the ground slopes upwards about ninety feet, and on the top is planted the town. It is a city of flowers—every house standing in its own garden of wild almond, and acacia, and other flowering plants. All sorts of creepers, with many-coloured blossoms, abound everywhere, and the cocoa palms give a tropical aspect to the scene.

The principal business street is Bay Street; but Government House and the Great Hotel are situated on the crest of the hill. From November to May this hotel is crowded with hundreds of American visitors, who seem to lose their coughs and weaknesses almost as soon as they land. It is said that for persons with weak lungs there is no climate in the world better than that of Nassau.

The hotel is managed by an American, and upon American principles. Steamers during the season ply fortnightly between Nassau and New York, and there is plenty of life and enjoyment.

As an American writer has said, to go from the North in midwinter to the Bahamas, is to get as near an approach to fairyland as can be found. But in fairyland one does not have boating, and fishing, and driving, and picnicking, although one

may have dancing; and all these things one has at Nassau, with a delicious atmosphere and endless fruit and flowers.

Were it not for the annual American immigration, the Bahamians would be infinitely poorer than they are; but the natural attractions of Nassau as a wintering place are so great that the wonder is that English people leave it entirely to the Americans.

THE BISHOP'S MISTAKE.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

LATE that night, when Theo, after giving her mother a long account of the party and the distinguished guests, came at last wearily upstairs into the room which she shared with Dollie, she was surprised and not particularly well pleased, for she was longing to be alone with her thoughts, to find the child still wide awake. She went to the little white bed and bent over it.

"Why, Dollie, what is the matter? Are you too tired to sleep?" she asked.

"No, but I wanted to speak to you, Theo," and Dollie threw her arms round her sister's neck and hugged her. "I wanted to be quite sure you were not unhappy about anything, Theo! You are quite sure, aren't you, dear," and Dollie's grey eyes looked so searchingly up into Theo's that the elder girl coloured and hesitated.

"Unhappy? Of course not, Dollie. What put that absurd idea into your head?" she answered lightly.

"Because—because—oh, Theo, don't be angry with me"—Dollie's arms tightened round Theo's neck—"but I saw you and Mr. Chetwynd in the orchid-house, and I saw him kiss your hand. I didn't hear a word—not a word; but I thought he was saying something that made you unhappy. Was he, darling?"

It was an odd thing for Theo to make so young a child her confidant. She often thought so afterwards, and wondered what possessed her to pour out the story of her unhappy love into Dollie's ears; but she was aching to unburden herself of her trouble and to seek comfort and sympathy from some one, and she would not tell her mother. "Poor mother has plenty to trouble her without that," Theo told herself. She knew, too, that Dollie was true as steel, and that there was no fear that anything she said would be repeated again.

And so, with her face close to Dollie's, and with Dollie's tiny hands clasped round her neck, she sobbed out her story.

"You must never repeat anything I have told you to mother, or Mr. Chetwynd, or any one, Dollie," she whispered when she was a little calmer, and more than a little comforted by Dollie's kisses and loving sympathy. "I ought not to have told this to a child like you, only my little Dollie"—and Theo smiled tenderly—"is such a wise little woman, and always gives me such good advice, that she seems different from other children. Now we will never speak of this again, dear, and you must go to sleep and forget it all."

It happened a few days after the garden party that Dollie was invited to spend a day with an aunt who lived in a town a few miles from Dulborough. The nurse took her to the station, and, seeing a benevolent-looking elderly gentleman in a first-class carriage reading a newspaper, put Dollie into the carriage, and asked if he would be kind enough to see that she got out at the right station.

"Oh, certainly, certainly. The little lady and I will take care of each other," the gentleman, in whom Dollie had already recognised the Bishop, answered pleasantly, and he smiled at her benevolently over his spectacles as the train went out of the station, and remarked what a fine day it was; but as Dollie absolutely declined to respond to his advances, he felt snubbed and retired behind his newspaper.

Dollie sat bolt upright in her corner, swinging her legs gently to and fro, and stared at him with an expression, which can only be described as malevolent, in her big grey eyes. There he sat, the wretch who had made Theo unhappy, whose cruelty had made Theo shed such bitter tears. Dollie ground her teeth and clenched her small hands in impotent rage as she looked at him, and inwardly longed to stick pins into the neat gaitered legs which peeped out from underneath the newspaper. He became uncomfortably conscious of the severe gaze at last. It fidgeted him; he could not read his newspaper in comfort with those severe eyes staring at him. He put it down in desperation at last, and looked and smiled at her.

"Well, my dear, and why do you look at me so intently?" he said. "Are you wondering who I am and what my name is?"

Dollie glowered at him.

"Oh no; I know who you are well enough," she replied in a tone as severe as her looks. "You are the Bishop, and I met you at Lady Curtis's garden party. I daresay you don't remember me," Dollie went on with much dignity, "for you weren't introduced to me; but I saw you, and I must say"—this with crushing sarcasm—"that I was very much disappointed in you! Very much," Dollie repeated emphatically.

"Indeed? I am very sorry to hear it. May I ask why?" the Bishop asked meekly.

Dollie gave a contemptuous laugh.

"Oh, you arn't a bit like a Bishop," she said. "Not like the Bishops in the Illustrated and Graphic, you know. I thought you would have been tall and handsome, with beautiful white sleeves, and a grand apron like father wears when he goes to the Freemasons' banquets! Not a shabby black thing."

The Bishop laughed.

"I am very sorry you were disappointed in me," he repeated gravely. "You are not one of Lady Curtis's little daughters, I think? No," as Dollie shook her head; "then what is your name?"

"My name is Dorothy Marion Farquhar," Dollie replied, and she fixed her bright eyes on the Bishop, and she looked very much as if she expected to see him shrink and shrivel up at the mention of the name. But finding, to her surprise, that instead of being crushed he merely nodded and smiled benevolently, she added rather weakly: "But they generally call me Dollie at home."

"Ah, yes; I remember I was introduced to a pretty young lady, a Miss Theo Farquhar I think, by Lady Curtis. I suppose you are her sister. You are rather like her," the Bishop answered.

"Indeed I am not. I am not half so pretty and nice as Theo. She is the dearest, and prettiest, and sweetest girl in the whole world," Dollie retorted energetically, and then with a gasp she added: "and you ought to be ashamed of yourself, you horrid old man, to make her so unhappy, that you ought!"

Never in the whole course of his life had the good Bishop been half so much astonished and bewildered as he was by this sudden unexpected accusation. For a minute he simply gasped and stared at Dollie, and she stared back at him with defiant, frightened eyes; then he said:

"My dear child, what do you mean? How have I made your sister unhappy? I scarcely know her."

"You have made her unhappy, both her and Mr. Chetwynd! And it is too bad of you when they love each other so much; just because you are so old and ugly, that nobody would want to love you or marry you," Dollie went on in her shrill, excited voice, "you don't want anybody else to get married."

And then she drew a short but trenchant parallel between the Bishop and the fox which had lost its tail, which at any other time would have vastly amused him; but now he was too bewildered and also too troubled to feel any amusement.

"I think you had better tell me all about it, my dear," he said gravely. "Do I understand you to say that Mr. Chetwynd is in love with your sister?"

"Of course he is, only what is the use of being in love when you won't let him marry her?" Dollie cried; and then, carried away by her feelings, and forgetful of her promise of silence, she poured a tolerably correct version of the story Theo had told her into the Bishop's attentive ears.

He listened in silence, not without some faint anger, some great disappointment. He had hoped so much from his young neophyte, from the young disciple who had sat at his feet and drunk in his words of wisdom, and who was to all appearance following so steadily in his footsteps. And it was a great shock and a bitter disappointment to him to find that already the one on whom he had fixed his hopes, to whom he had entrusted the completion of the many schemes which he had set on foot, but which in all probability he would not live to carry out, had turned aside from the path they had marked out together and was hankering after forbidden joys! And yet, severe though his disappointment was, there was mingled with it a faint feeling of pride and satisfaction. After all, his pupil had been loyal to his training, to his teacher! Great though the temptation was, he had been strong enough to put it aside, and had preferred to crush back the natural yearnings of a young man's heart, rather than prove disloyal to his master's teaching. There was good stuff in the lad, the Bishop thought approvingly. But it was a pity, a great pity!

He looked so grave and sad that Dollie grew frightened. Her anger died away, and the remembrance of her promise to

Theo, which in her agitation she had quite forgotten, came back to her. She put out her hand and touched the Bishop gently.

"Are you angry with me?" she whispered in a subdued voice.

The Bishop smiled kindly. He took her hand and gave it a reassuring squeeze.

"No, my child. I am not angry—only very sorry," he said absently.

"And you won't tell Theo, or Mr. Chetwynd, or anybody that I told you," Dollie went on in an imploring tone. "She would be so angry with me, and I can't bear Theo to be angry. I—I love her so," Dollie said, clasping her small hands fervently. "So don't tell her, please."

The Bishop smiled again.

"No, I won't tell her," he said. "I think with you that she would not like to know that you had told me this, so we will keep it a secret between us—eh, Miss Dollie? You can keep a secret, can't you? And I will promise you another thing," he added more gravely—"that if it is as you say, and if I am the only obstacle in the way of your sister's happiness, that obstacle will be very soon removed. There," he held out his hand with a kind smile, "let us shake hands on the bargain."

They were the best of friends after that. The Bishop got out at the next station, and bought some chocolate, and a long-desired book of fairy tales for Dollie, at the sight of which the delighted child's face brightened into absolute beauty; and they were both mutually sorry when they reached the station where Dollie was to alight, and they had to say good-bye to each other.

The Bishop had to attend several meetings that day, and was too much occupied to bestow any more thought upon such a trivial matter as his godson's love-story; but late at night, when all the arduous work of the day was over, when all of his household but himself were in bed and asleep, and he was sitting alone in his study, it rose before him vividly again.

What if he had made a mistake—if his pupil were right and he wrong after all, he wondered? Some words which had been said to him only a short time before, by a poor fellow whom a terrible accident had bereft at once of wife and children, and to whom the Bishop had gone with kindly words of consolation and sympathy, came back to him.

"Eh, ye mean well, my lord," the man had said—"ye mean well, but ye never had a wife and bairns yourself, an' ye

can't understand what their loss means to me."

And the Bishop had bowed his head, and in silence acknowledged the truth of the words, and felt that he in his ignorance could not fathom the anguish of that grief-stricken heart.

Might it not have been possible that his sympathies would have been wider, his heart larger—that he could have done a better and nobler work in the world, and drawn closer to the hearts of his people, if he, too, like other men, had known more of earthly joys and sorrows, had loved and been loved again, had rejoiced at the marriage feasts or wept by the graves of his children? And then there rose before him a vision of a fair face, whose sunny blue eyes and golden waving hair had once, in his undergraduate days, touched his heart and tempted him to turn aside from the settled purpose of his life. Love had passed by him very closely once, but he had no welcome for it, and it had left him for ever; and now old age was coming rapidly upon him, a lonely old age, uncheered and unbrightened by love of wife or child, and he would go down to his grave full of years and full of honours, and die as he had lived, a lonely, loveless man.

Sitting there alone in his study, surrounded by the beloved companions of his life, his books, he looked back over his life, and honourable, and useful, and blameless as he felt it to be, he acknowledged that there was something wanting in it, that in spite of its success and honours it was but a poor, incomplete thing after all; that there was another and a more excellent way which he had failed to see. And now out of the mouth of a child wisdom had spoken to him, and from the lips of little Dollie he had learned the great truth, that human love can never contract the heart or weaken the energies, but rather would strengthen and enlarge both heart and energies.

When at last his vigil was ended—and that was not till the grey morning light was stealing in through the windows—the Bishop had fully learnt his lesson, and was a sadder and humbler, but a wiser and a better man. There was yet one thing for him to do before he sought his much-needed rest, and that was to write to Maurice Chetwynd.

"I have heard, my dear lad," he wrote, "no matter from what source—that you have become deeply attached to the young

lady I saw with you at Lady Curtis's party, and that you have been fortunate enough to win her love; and it has occurred to me that, remembering certain conversations which we have had together on the subject of matrimony, you might hesitate to tell me that your views had changed, and that you doubted whether after all a solitary life, such as I have lived, is the life best calculated to further the great work which is equally dear to us both. So I write to you, and I charge you by the love I bear to you and you to me, that you will not allow yourself to be influenced in any degree by the opinions which I have formed and expressed in the matter, but freely follow the dictates of your heart and conscience. For the older I grow and the longer I live, the more sure I feel that the love of a good and pure woman is the greatest safeguard and the greatest blessing that any man—whether he be priest or layman—can win for himself. We all make mistakes, Maurice, and perhaps the plan of life which I years ago marked out for myself may have been one of them—Heaven only knows. And so I bid you god-speed in your wooing, my dear lad."

The dawn was brightening into morning before the Bishop finished his letter. He extinguished the lamp and went to the window, and drawing up the blind, admitted the sunshine and the fresh air. The fresh calm loveliness of the summer morning rested on the garden and park, the sun was shining, the dewdrops sparkled on every leaf and flower, the birds were singing, an early rising bee buzzed among the roses. Nature, with a hundred voices, spoke to him of a divine love—that love of which earthly love is but a sign and symbol—and he bowed his head upon his hands, and in all earnestness gave heartfelt thanks that his eyes had been opened to his mistake, and that the knowledge had not come too late to save his pupil from falling into his own error.

Maurice Chetwynd found the Bishop's letter awaiting him, when on the following day he came, tired by a long round of visits and the sultry heat of the August afternoon, into his study. It may be easily imagined with what feelings of mingled delight and surprise he read it, and how quickly after reading it he found himself standing before the door of the Red House, with the precious letter in his hand, and a flush of joy and triumph in

his face which made him look absolutely handsome for once.

Mrs. Farquhar had gone out for a drive with her husband, but Miss Farquhar and Miss Dollie were both in the drawing-room, the maid told him. He entered unannounced. Dollie was in her favourite seat reading, and Theo rose from the piano where she was seated, and welcomed him with a blush and a smile. She held out a slim white hand for him to shake, and was much surprised when, instead of that formal greeting, he put his arm round her waist, and, drawing her closely to him, kissed her.

"There, read that, my darling," he said. "See what he says—oh, he is the kindest, the best of men!" Chetwynd cried.

Theo trembled and grew very pale. She pushed the letter back to him.

"I can't understand—you read it," she faltered, and Chetwynd, in a voice broken with happiness, obeyed.

No one noticed the start Dollie gave as he read, or the vivid flush of delight and triumph which swept over her face, or the radiant light in her big grey eyes. It was all she could do to be silent, to refrain from proclaiming her share in the matter, and to claim their gratitude and thanks. But she had promised, and she bit her lips resolutely and choked back the eager words that rose to her lips, and with a discretion beyond her years—but she was always such a wise little woman—she slipped noiselessly out of the window and left the lovers alone. And never once did either the Bishop or Dollie allude to the conversation which had taken place in the railway carriage, and which had been productive of such happy results; but a few days after the engagement was announced publicly, when the Bishop came to call at the Red House, both Theo and her mother were greatly surprised to see Dollie, who was generally very shy and reserved with strangers, run forward to meet him with a flushed face and sparkling eyes, and hold up her lips to be kissed. The Bishop, however, understood it all well enough, all the gratitude and love which the kiss and the fervent pressure of the small fingers mutely expressed, and returned both kiss and pressure with equal heartiness. And from that day a curious kind of friendship grew up between the oddly assorted pair. Dollie was very often a guest at the Palace, and the Bishop's callers grew quite ac-

customed to see the little figure in the window-seat bending its fair face and golden head over a book, or riding on her white pony by the Bishop's side through the pleasant country lanes. And as the years went on and Dollie grew from a pretty delicate child into a tall, slim maiden, with a beautiful, thoughtful face, and wistful grey eyes, and a lover came to woo her, it was into the Bishop's ears that Dollie first whispered the story of her love, and asked for his consent and approval.

A TRAGIC PAGE FROM THE HISTORY OF AN OLD CITY.

THERE is one city in our kingdom, and perhaps only one, which in this noisy, innovating nineteenth century of ours still remains emphatically an old-world city. Red-brick houses and rows of trim cottages have done their worst; huge barracks and a colossal railway station have appeared; but even they have, each in turn, been forced to yield to the charm of Eboracum. In York, the most flaunting of new buildings soon assumes a sober, decorous air, befitting a town guarded by gates, which perhaps the Romans had a hand in making.

As you wander through its streets, you come across old names—Goodramgate, Spurriergate; hear odd expressions—duties of the pasture-masters, rights of the free-men, and chance allusions to quaint saint-day rites and customs, which seem at once to plunge you into the far back ages.

Jewbury and Jubbergate, however, two of the oldest names in York, are now names, and nothing more. Of the old Jewbury, the ancient Israelitish burial-ground, lying, as was the custom, beyond the city walls, not a trace remains. Jubbergate, a narrow winding street of picturesque, gabled houses, with projecting storeys, is still an interesting relic of mediæval architecture; but not a building in it dates further back than the fifteenth century, whilst the twelfth, as we know from the old chronicles, was Jubbergate's golden age, the time when princely mansions and magnificent dwellings stood there, side by side, and vied with each other in splendour. Jubbergate was at that time the head-quarters of a rich Jewish colony, and it seems curious that, whilst the remains of so many other buildings of greater antiquity can still be seen in York, not one stone of these strong-

holds—the chief houses in Jubbergate were fortified—was to be found even so early as the sixteenth century.

The old city historian here comes to our assistance, and describes how, in one night, in the early spring of 1189, Jubbergate, with all its monuments of wealth and industry, vanished from the face of the earth.

When the Normans came to York, they brought in their train some Jewish merchants who, liking the people and the city—in those days York was a thriving seaport, with a trade second only to that of London—established themselves there, and applied themselves, with all the dogged obstinacy of their race, to cultivating good relations with the Yorkists. In this endeavour they must, at first, have met with some success; for, as time goes on, we find them inviting their less fortunately placed brethren to come and share their luck; and these came in such numbers that, by the middle of the twelfth century, the Jews had become an important factor in the city.

From their own records we learn that, when Richard the First was proclaimed King, the Jews were in high feather; they knew that their new sovereign was both warlike and needy, and, with such an one, they could always make good terms. No sooner, therefore, was the date of the coronation fixed, than there was great excitement in Jubbergate; the Jews met in solemn conclave, and decided to send ambassadors to London, to greet the new King with loyal addresses and rich presents. Benedict and Jocenus, two of the leading members of the Synagogue, were chosen for the mission; for—who knew?—perhaps they, being cunning men, might find a chance of whispering in their sovereign's ear all that his Jewish subjects could do for him, if he would grant them the protection they craved.

The ambassadors set out with all the trappings of ostentatious wealth, caring not one whit for the lowering, envious glances of their neighbours, but openly showing their triumph; for the day was at hand, they thought, when Israel should dwell in safety. In London, however, their hopes received a severe blow, for the rumour spread through the Jewish quarter that Richard had forbidden any Israelite to be present at the coronation feast. Their spirits soon revived, though, for one of the young King's closest friends was sent round to whisper to the Rabbis that they

had no cause for fear; the royal proclamation was only meant to please the multitude, and they, the Jews, might rest assured that gold would always secure the favour and protection of the new King.

Rendered bold by this assurance, Benedict and Jocenus, accompanied by some of their Jewish friends, mingled freely with the crowd on coronation day. They did not go near the Court—that was still forbidden—but wandered through the streets as other sightseers might have done. What danger could they fear, with the gracious words of the King's favourite still ringing in their ears? But an excited mob reckes little of the promises of a King.

Reading some real or fancied scorn on the faces of Benedict and his friends, the populace attacked them with spears and bludgeons; the Jews resisted, but were overpowered by numbers, and a general slaughter began. Some were killed at once; others were exposed to the most degrading torture; whilst others again were dragged into churches, and, with blows and threats, were forced to forswear the religion of their ancestors. Amongst these latter was Benedict, who, scarcely conscious from the brutal violence to which he had been subjected, was declared to have consented to be baptized. If he had consented, he soon repented of his apostasy; for, the next day, when carried before the King that he might publicly proclaim his conversion, he struck awe and terror into the hearts of the most frivolous of the courtiers, as, standing there, with flowing beard and hair, like another Elijah, he denounced them and their foul deeds, and declared that, as he had lived, so he would die, a Jew—one of God's chosen people. Nor does he seem to have spared the King himself, although it was upon a luckless Bishop who chanced to be present, that the full force of his righteous scorn fell.

Evidently Benedict's address was not without effect, for we find Richard giving minute directions for his security; but it was too late, the ill-usage to which he had been subjected had done its work, and he died that evening.

Jocenus, who had escaped uninjured, hastened to return to York. There is something quite pathetic in the way the old chronicler here wonders what were the thoughts which passed through the mind of the Jew as he trod again the paths he had passed over but a few days before, with

his friend, full of life, hope, and ambition, by his side.

Once in York, Jocenus had a hard task to perform: he must break the news to Benedict's wife that she is a widow, her children fatherless; he must tell the Synagogue that of all the goodly company they sent forth, he alone has escaped. Still, even to the mourning Jubbergate, the royal message, of which Jocenus was the bearer, must have brought some comfort; in it Richard speaks with regret of the recent outrage, and pledges his royal word that they, his loyal subjects, though Jews, need have no fear for the future; neither in life, nor in goods, shall they suffer wrong whilst in his land.

History records not what price was paid for this decree. Assured thus of Richard's favour, the Jews in York continued to ply their trade with all diligence, though the elders, who took full note of the times, felt that all danger was not past.

The old chronicler tells us that, long before this time, the Jews had become objects of strong aversion to their fellow-citizens; and that, when in the reign of Henry the Second, they began to build fine stone dwellings—princely mansions the monks call them—the indignant wrath of the poverty-stricken Yorkshire gentlemen knew no bounds. No great wonder either, he seems to think, for the rough English homesteads of that day could ill bear comparison with the new homes of these foreign traders; whilst the Yorkists lived in timber huts, devoid of any trace of comfort, the Jews not only had stone houses, but, in decorating them, indulged to the full their national love for glowing colours and Asiatic splendour, even hanging before the windows precious silks and damasks.

The chronicler dwells on these curtains, as a special eyesore. Perhaps in addition to gratifying the aesthetic tastes of the Israelites, they served a second purpose, that of shutting out all prying eyes.

Nor was that their only offence. The Jews, with their hereditary herbal lore, knew how to concoct many a savoury dish, the smell of which excited no small amount of envious rage in the souls of their less luxuriously-fed fellow-citizens. Perhaps, too, strong in the protection of the Angevin sovereign, they had cast aside that prudent self-restraint by which they had first won toleration, and no longer troubled to hide the scorn they felt for their boorish Gentile neighbours.

Be that as it may, a dozen causes—the memory of debts which never could be paid, of lands pledged to the hated intruders—all had their share in swelling the wrath of the Yorkists. Money, probably, was at the bottom of this tragedy, as of most others; for the Englishmen were poor and extravagant, and the Jews unscrupulous and grasping.

Nobles, gentry, freemen, all had borrowed money; they all had bonds in the strong chest of the sacred treasure-room; go where they would, the Cathedral frowned down upon them, speaking to them not as God's house of God's service, but of their debts and pledged lands.

When the news came of the massacre in London, the hearts of the Yorkists beat high, and it began to be whispered round that they too might, if they only dared, win back their bonds and thus their freedom.

Whilst Richard was in England, the boldest amongst them did not dare to strike; but the day he sailed for the Holy Land the fate of the Jews in York was sealed.

Richard, nicknamed Mala Bestia, one of the Yorkshire gentlemen who owed most to the Jews, persuaded some dozen of his fellow debtors to join him in a plot, by which they might, he said, not only free themselves from all past claims, but provide wealth for the future. There was nothing specially new or ingenious in their plan; it was one which, from Nero's day—and even he was not its inventor—has been tried again and again, and generally with success. They arranged to set fire to the city, and then, declaring it to be the work of the Jews, make this pretended crime an excuse for their extermination.

The first part of the plan was executed with admirable precision; but, unfortunately for its success, it chanced that on the day of the fire a strong wind was blowing, so that the citizens were too alarmed for the safety of their own houses to think of plundering the dwellings of the Jews. Mala Bestia, however, having no possession of his own to excite his anxiety, promptly led the attack upon the house of Benedict's widow. He did not take it without a hard struggle; but, once in, he murdered the widow and her children, seized everything that was of value, and set fire to the rest.

Meantime, Jocenus, knowing that his house would be the next to be attacked, went to the Governor, and reminding him of Richard's decree, claimed his protection. The Governor at once promised to put a

stop to the disorder, and invited Jocenus, with his family, and such of the Jews as feared the populace, to take up their abode in the Castle, until the city should have become calm. His invitation was thankfully accepted, and when, at daybreak the following morning, Richard Mala Bestia and his troop were preparing to continue their work of outrage, they found to their disgust that their victims had escaped them; for not only were all the Jews of importance safely behind the strong walls of the Castle, but they had taken with them their wealth, money, jewels, and precious merchandise. The mob wreaked its vengeance on the Jews who had chosen to remain to guard their houses; every one of these perished; and that night, every house in Jubbergate was razed to the ground!

Then there was a truce for a few days—only a few, though, for the Governor, by some evil chance, was forced to leave the Castle to discharge his duties in the city; and, in an unfortunate hour, the Jews, suspecting, perhaps not without reason, that he intended to betray them into the hands of their enemies, refused to lower the drawbridge when he wished to return to the Castle. Enraged at what he considered the black ingratitude of those whom he had befriended, the Governor summoned the High Sheriff, Radalphus de Granville, to his counsel; and together they decided that, at any cost, the King's fortress must be delivered from the hands of the unbelievers. As there were not enough regular soldiers in York to undertake a siege, Radalphus de Granville issued a writ of "Posse Comitatus," by which the inhabitants of the whole countryside were summoned to the attack. When he saw the motley crew that answered his appeal, he must have realised the imprudence of which he had been guilty; but it was too late. He found to his cost that it is an easier task to excite than to calm; his orders, his attempts at maintaining discipline, and his entreaties for moderation, were alike unheeded; in fact, as he and the Governor soon discovered, power and authority had fallen from their hands into the hands of stronger, because more violent, men. As always happens at such times, the populace had chosen their own leaders. Richard Mala Bestia was of course to the fore, and, as the first originator of the plot, wielded special authority; his business was to excite the mob by appealing to its cupidity and baser impulses. But the

Yorkists had another leader much more dangerous to the Jews than he. A certain Friar, a "Canon Hermit," the old books call him, clad in a long, flowing, white garment, marched at the head of the attackers, uttering wild shrieks of "Let the enemies of Christ be destroyed," and exciting the people beyond all control by telling them that fighting against the Jews was fighting the battle of God. The Friar promptly led his troops to the Castle walls, and the attack began. Wherever the besiegers appeared for a moment to falter, his white-clad figure was seen flying to that point, and there, with wild words and impassioned gesture, exciting the men to prodigies of valour.

At length, in the ardour of his zeal, the Canon Hermit advanced too near to the wall, and his brains were dashed out by a stone from the great battering-ram fixed on the walls.

In the meantime the Jews, though knowing that for the moment they were safe—the Castle walls were strong—did not deceive themselves as to the danger of their position.

Now, there was by chance a foreign Rabbi on a visit to York at that time. The old chronicler does not give his name, or even say what countryman he was, but speaks of him vaguely as a man of commanding presence, with dark, piercing eyes and a flowing beard, who had come from the far East on a mission, to give instruction to the scattered Israelites. He seems to have been a personage of considerable importance, for, from the first outbreak of the disorder, he assumed absolute authority over the colony. For two whole days he directed the defence with a singular knowledge of military tactics, never leaving the ramparts; still, from the first he must have felt the hopelessness of the struggle. There were not five hundred men in the Castle, whilst the assailants might be counted by thousands; the bread, too, was running short, the supply of water was scanty, for there had been no time to provision the garrison.

On the evening of the second day of the siege, the Rabbi visited the fortifications, and carefully calculated how much longer the stout walls would resist attack. Some few hours, perhaps twelve, he thought; but he saw clearly that the end was drawing near.

Well, he swore it should not find them unprepared. He summoned the whole of the besieged—men, women, and children

—into the room of state, the room where, when the Kings were in York, they held their councils. He stood under the dais, the place reserved for Royalty in quiet times, and, facing that flock confided to his care, scanning them with burning, eager eyes to be sure that they caught his meaning as he spoke, he delivered perhaps the strangest address that man ever gave his fellows.

"Men of Israel," he began, "our God, whose laws I have prescribed to you, commands that we should at any time die for our law; and, behold, Death now looks us in the face, and we have but to choose whether we should lead a base and scandalous life, or take the best method to come at a gallant and glorious death. If we fall into the hands of our enemies, at their own will and pleasure we must die; but our Creator when He gave us life did also enjoin us that with our own hands, and of our own accord, we should devoutly restore it to Him again, rather than wait on the cruelty of any enemy. This many of our brethren in many great tribulations have bravely performed; they knew how to do it; and the most decent manner of execution is pointed out to us."

Although we read that the greater number of his hearers listened to his advice with kindling eyes and unflinching demeanour, we can scarcely wonder at finding that some few—the weaker brothers and sisters who are never lacking in any assembly, no matter how heroic—felt that the ordeal was too hard, that they could not face it.

In any case, we know that the controversy ran high, but the Rabbi stopped it with denunciations fierce as any Elisha ever hurled at Ahab's Queen; and this was the decree he made:

"Those that this good and pious course displeases, let them separate and be cut off from the Holy Congregation; we, for the sake of our paternal law, despise the love of transitory life."

Then we are told that the weaker Jews withdrew, and one of the most piteous scenes that history records began. First a solemn sacrifice was held. The great stone hearth, in the middle of the hall, as was the fashion of the day, was laden with rich spoil—costly merchandise of every kind, damasks, silks, cloths cunningly wrought with gold and silver, all were placed there and burnt. Pearls and delicately-worked gold ornaments were crushed under men's heels, coins were chipped and defaced; for

each one in that crowd was resolved that not one iota of the Jewish wealth should fall into the hands of the Christians.

This done, there was a solemn leave-taking, and then Jocenus, having for the second time tenderly embraced his wife, the queenly Anna, plunged a dagger into her heart. She smiled into his face as she received the blow, as if to thank him for the deed he was doing, and fell dead at his feet. Then, from the eldest to the youngest, each in turn, he slew his children. For one moment—only one—he paused in his work. His wife and his four sons lay dead before him, killed by his hand, and his Miriam, his dark-eyed darling, the Benjamin of his old age, alone remained. Must he slay her too? He glanced wildly around. Was there no way of escape? The stern eye of the foreign teacher was upon him; duty must not be shirked; and little Miriam was added to the heap of slain. Then the Rabbi—thinking some mark of favour was due to one who had set such a heroic example, perhaps, too, pitying the sore distress of the man—with his own hand cut the throat of Jocenus.

The work of suicide continued, until the floor lay strewn with the bodies of more than four hundred men and six hundred women and children. The Rabbi was the last to die; and not he alone, but each one of these women and children, met death with the calm, heroic fortitude which scorns to utter a complaint.

The renegades who had withdrawn before the slaughter began, but who had lingered around the closed doors, declared that, from first to last, not a shriek, not a moan, was heard.

The next morning when the mob, with redoubled fury, returned to the attack, instead of the resolute defenders of the previous day, they found on the walls only some fifty white and trembling men, who hid their faces and seemed to dread the light of day. In answer to a parley, the besieged related what had taken place during the night, and, as a proof of the truth of their story, they threw from the wall the bodies of the Rabbi and Jocenus.

It was easy now to come to terms, as the only wish of the besieged was to leave the Castle, whilst the besiegers, now that their chief enemies were dead, were willing to consent to anything that would give the citadel, with its supposed wealth, into their hands. They gladly promised that such of the surviving Jews as would consent to be baptized should escape unhurt.

The gates of the Castle were then opened; but, when the Yorkists discovered how the Rabbi had baulked them of their hoped-for booty, their fury knew no bounds, and they at once set to work to wreak their vengeance upon the few Jews who were still in their power; they slew them without mercy. Some few, as soon as the gates were open, had fled straight to the Cathedral, and there clung with desperate hands to the altar for protection; they alone escaped the general slaughter.

Even the cunning, foreign Rabbi had been unable to prevent the Yorkists reaping some profit from their crimes. The securities for the money lent by the Jews to the Yorkshire gentlemen were in the Cathedral; but the conspirators were too deeply steeped in crime for any feeling with regard to the sanctity of the place to stop their progress. So they burst open the door with scant ceremony, and forced their way into the treasure chamber. Was there ever another such scene in a Christian church? Hundreds of men stained with blood, blackened with fire, struggling in one mad fight for their bonds! With what fiendish joy they must have watched those old parchments crumble away in the flames! When the work was done, they stood forth as free men, without a debt, and therefore, as they thought, without a care.

But their joy was short-lived; when once the intoxication of their triumph was passed, they began to be haunted by misgivings. King Richard had pledged his word that the Jews should live in peace in his land, and the Plantagenets were not to be played with; they would tolerate no poaching on their preserves, and the Jews were a royal sport. If Richard had been in England, there is little doubt but that York would have paid dearly for its crime; but he was in the East, and messengers travelled slowly in those days. Still, there was a panic in the city when the news came that the Bishop of Ely, Chancellor and Regent, was on his way thither, with the King's command "to execute strict justice, without favour or affection, on all offenders." The chief criminals fled at once to Scotland, where in those days the enemies of the English Kings were always sure of a welcome. The remaining Yorkists pleaded that it was not they, but the fugitives, aided by the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, who had committed the crime. In spite of all excuses, however, the Bishop levied a

heavy fine upon the city; committed the Governor and the High Sheriff (poor Radalphus) to prison; placed his own brother, Osbert de Longchamp, in command of the district; and then departed, taking in his train one hundred citizens of York as hostages for the future good behaviour of the city.

On King Richard's coronation day, the Jewish colony in York numbered one thousand five hundred souls, rich merchants, learned physicians, skilled artisans, men and women of a culture far surpassing that of the English noble of that time; but, before the new King had reigned a year, all these had perished! No, forsooth; some twenty of the lowest type of Jew, the renegade, were spared. But, although this was in the so-called iron age—the age of a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye—no single drop of Christian blood atoned for the murder of those Jews!

STARS AND THEIR AGES.

ON the twenty-fifth of October, 1887, at the annual public meeting of the five Academies at Paris, M. Janssen, the eminent astronomer, Director of the Meudon Observatory, read a very remarkable Paper which may fairly be called the universal application of the doctrine of Evolution.

He first mentioned the more correct notions now accepted concerning the constitution of the Sun. The great Herschel believed it to be inhabited; Arago allowed it to be habitable. Those opinions entertained by two such illustrious men, show what progress Science has made in a quarter of a century. At present, there is not an astronomer who would admit for an instant the possibility of life in our great central source of heat and light.

And yet it would be incorrect to suppose that recent ideas about the office and constitution of the Sun are the result of direct observation. The grand discoveries in Celestial Physics made of late years by the Spectroscope, combined with the facts already revealed by telescopes, have enabled us to rise to a higher order of truths, and to apply to the Universe, the Stars included, the notions of age and evolution, which have hitherto been exclusively reserved for terrestrial phenomena.

The word "age" implies an existence which has had a beginning, a development, and an end. Age denotes a cycle

of events subordinate to the lapse of time. Whatever is eternal has no age. The Age of Stars, therefore, signifies that those luminaries obey a law of evolution similar to that to which organised beings are subjected on our globe.

The stars, then, whose light appears extra-terrestrial and purely heavenly in its nature; whose fixity has so often been taken as the symbol of immutability itself; which our education and traditions have taught us to consider as eternal lights suspended in the skies; those stars, like all earthly existences, are amenable to the laws of birth and death; they also experience the effects of time and the vicissitudes inherent in every form of life. For the stars are suns analogous to our own; and they obey the laws of evolution, the results of which for them are a beginning, a period of activity, a decline, and a finish.

These ideas may be said to have had their origin in William Herschel's observations of the nebulae, which often present brilliant points. Those points, if, instead of considering them in one single instance, you follow them in a great number of nebulae, are found to be surrounded by cloudy matter or nebulosities, more or less extensive and diffuse. It appears that those bright points or nucleuses exhibit every degree of condensation of the matter of which they are composed, from the thinnest cloud to the completely formed star.

The idea which then struck Herschel was that, in the nebulae, we behold worlds in the course of formation. The stars, consequently, are only nebular matter which has been condensed, and so has given birth to suns and to the planetary bodies which attend them.

It was, therefore, the invention of the telescope which permitted the doctrine of Evolution to extend itself beyond the Earth, and become applicable to the Solar System. Herschel, as we have seen, was thereby enabled to study the series of progressing nebulae. Spectral Analysis now permits us to investigate the condition of the stars called fixed.

The stars, in fact, present a problem of extreme difficulty, for they are nothing but simple brilliant points; and such they remain when beheld through the most powerful telescopes. Nay, even, the more perfect the instrument, the smaller the luminous point ought to appear. The point is surrounded by luminous rings, and is often affected by scintillation or

twinkling. The rings result from the constitution of the luminous movement itself, the twinkling from our atmosphere. Neither phenomenon has any influence on the image of the star, unless to disfigure it. In this investigation, therefore, we can expect no help from the telescope. Some other mode of inquiry must be employed.

This method consists in separating the elementary rays emitted by the star observed. Instead of studying its light in respect to the image which it presents, that light is analysed, and the analysis reveals the chemical nature of the body which emits the light, and even of those which, lying on the forward passage of the rays, are likely to modify them by absorption.

The history of the discovery, and of the first applications of Spectral Analysis, is too long to recapitulate here. An immense sensation was produced in the public mind by the announcement that the analysis of the Sun's atmosphere had been made, and that it was proved to contain the greater part of our earthly metals. This analysis was soon applied to the Stars, and even to the Nebulae, until Science was able to assert the chemical and material unity of the Universe.

No method of investigation is so universally applicable as that supplied by Spectral Analysis, which writes its record of what is going on throughout boundless space in characters unmistakable by those who have learned to interpret them.

Since the Earth, once a globe of fire, has already passed through a complete series of periods before arriving at its actual state, and since all these phenomena have the Earth's cooling for their cause, the logical and unavoidable induction is that the Sun, composed of the same elements as the Earth, although their entire mass is so much greater, must also pass—infinitely more slowly, it is true, but quite as inevitably—through similar phases.

The Earth is only an incrustated sun. When the Sun is incrustated, I cannot help asking, will it be habitable like the Earth? It would be difficult to prove a negative answer. If, even in this world, insects are believed to be endowed with senses of which the human race has no conception, surely extinct suns, now become worlds, may be inhabited by creatures of whose life-conditions we can form no conjecture. We may guess widely; we cannot know; but still it may be.

And now, how can the stars, formed of

like elements—varying only by their combinations—escape the consequences of this grand law? Let us add that Herschel's idea, namely, that the nebulae which the telescope cannot resolve into stars, are formed of cosmic matter and not of stars, whose immense distance prevents their separation, is strikingly confirmed by Huggins, whose analysis, in fact, declares that they present the characters of incandescent gases. We may, therefore, legitimately make use of the word *Evolution* when speaking of the stars; we may rightly apply to them the word "*age*," which is only a consequence of the former term.

It is by consideration of the spectrum given by stars that their relative age can be assigned to them. When a sun has once been formed, we may take it as a general rule that, under equal conditions, the higher its temperature, the more efficiently it will fulfil its functions as a radiating body, and the longer will be the period during which it is able to fulfil them. Thus we may say that the age of stars is connected with their temperature.

Now their temperature is denoted by the characters of the spectrum. The admirable prismatic image which shows us all the rays that a star emits, separated, classified, arranged, in which we can now read its chemical composition and other valuable data, also tells us of its temperature.

If the body were simply heated without attaining incandescence, its spectrum would inform us of that circumstance by the absence of the rays which produce the sensation of light. But when incandescence is reached, luminous and photographic rays show themselves. When the temperature rises yet higher, the spectrum becomes richer on the side of the violet, which is always the indication of very great heat.

At a still further increase of heat, the violet, and the rays invisible to us, which follow it, become more abundant. We can even conceive, by a sort of abstraction, a body brought to so high a temperature that it would emit only the invisible rays lying beyond the violet, which our eyes could not perceive, and which would be revealed only by photography or by instruments constructed for the measurement of heat. Thus, on the ascending scale of temperatures, a body at first is not visible; it becomes so afterwards, and then ceases to be so by very excess of temperature.

There exist in the heavens a great number of stars whose spectrum is de-

veloped at the violet end. They are those in general whose light appears to us white or bluish. The most remarkable is Sirius, the Dog Star, who, by the floods of light he sends us, is without a rival in the sky. The volume of this star is enormous, and incomparably greater than that of our Sun. He is enveloped by a vast atmosphere of hydrogen, as evidenced by his spectrum. He contains, without doubt, the other metals, but their presence is difficult to prove, in all probability on account of the very power of radiation possessed by the vapours of those metals. All which, according to M. Janssen's theory, indicates a Sun in the full possession of its activity, and which will retain that activity during immense periods of time.

After Sirius, who is the glory of our sky, and who will long remain so if Science is not mistaken, we find another star surrounded by a vast hydrogenised atmosphere, namely Vega, in the constellation of the Lyre. There is no doubt that the temperature of the mass of this distant sun is very high, and that it has before it a long period of activity and radiation.

These two examples of stars in the full development of their solar energy are perhaps the most remarkable within our scope of vision; but they are not the only ones. There exist in the heavens a considerable number of stars belonging to this category. We may even say that the majority of stars visible by the naked eye are in a like condition. But, at the same time, another class of stars has been discovered, the character of whose spectrum would indicate a much more advanced degree of condensation. Instead of vast atmospheres of hydrogen, analysis shows a gaseous stratum, lower, denser, consisting of those metallic vapours which we find unmistakably in our Sun; for our central luminary belongs to the class of stars whose solar functions, although still energetic, have nevertheless passed the period of what may be called "*their youth*," if such an expression be permitted. A remarkable fact is that, in general, the colour of these stars is in accordance with their constitution. It has lost the brilliancy, the whiteness, which characterises stars of the first class. Some have a yellow, and even an orange tinge of colour.

To cite examples of stars which have passed the most active period of their radiation: we have, first, our Sun, as has just been mentioned; then Aldebaran, the eye of the Bull, which lies in the Sun's

path along the Zodiac, and which shines in winter above the splendid constellation Orion; Arcturus, the bright star in Boötes, which may be found in a prolongation of the line of stars in the Great Bear's tail, and whose ruddy light betrays a considerable advancement of its evolution.

But there exist other stars which have arrived at a still more pronounced degree of sidereal progress. In these cases, the spectrum shows signs of fatal cooling-down. The violet, the colour of high temperatures, is here absolutely wanting; at the same time, dark bands—indications of a thicker and cooler atmosphere, in which chemical affinities are beginning their work of association—intrude themselves upon the spectrum. Again, we have the remarkable fact that the colour of these stars answers in general to the conditions admitted to be signs of decrepitude; it becomes deep orange, often passing into sombre red.

This method of investigation leads us to the recognition of the grand principle of Evolution, which is destined to become one of the most fruitful in astronomical Science. Sprung from the consideration of our earthly existences, it seemed unlikely to reach beyond the horizons of our globe. It has, nevertheless, not been confined within those limits, and, at present, has taken decided possession of the whole expanse of the heavens.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART II.

CHAPTER XII. ANTOINETTE.

MADAME DE MONTMIRAIL was, of course, the ruling spirit at La Tour Blanche; that was only natural. But her aunt, whom she met with a great appearance of cordiality, was not quite prepared for the way in which she used her power. As to scolding Celia, or remonstrating with her at all seriously, that had been a difficulty even in her young days; now it was totally out of the question, and obedience to Celia, more or less slavish, seemed to be a necessity.

The Marquise decided that her aunt must be very tired, and carried her off to her room very early. Mrs. Percival was

tired, but she was not in the least sleepy, and felt a little unwilling to leave the people downstairs, each of whom interested her separately.

Antoinette, it was true, had already disappeared. Vincent, flung at full length in the most comfortable chair, was reading the "Figaro." The Marquis was outside the window in the moonlight, with his unexpected guest, Paul Romaine, to whom he had given a hearty welcome. Mrs. Percival felt vaguely as if she were looking on at a play.

Now she sat down in her rather gloomy tapestried bedroom, and watched Celia as she moved about, with a kind of idle stateliness which was very becoming; it had grown upon her of late years.

She was a beautiful woman, though she had lost the charm of youth; she had grown out of her aunt's knowledge in a way not to be measured by years. Yet Mrs. Percival, being constant and soft-hearted, looked at her with lingering admiration, almost affection. She would have liked to speak to her openly if she could have hoped for any sincerity, or even softness, in return. But she knew too well that Celia, with all her smiles and seeming frankness, must be a disappointment for ever.

"I almost forget an English room," said Celia, looking round; "but I hope you have got everything you want, Aunt Flo. Timms will be here directly; Suzanne is taking care of her—Antoinette's old nurse, you know."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Percival. "This is a most beautiful old place, Celia; I hope you are happy."

After she had said this, she felt foolish, but the words came out in spite of her.

"Oh, yes," said Celia indifferently; "but mixed marriages are a mistake. Take my advice, and don't encourage another."

Mrs. Percival stared, silenced by her coolness. Nobody, indeed, could truly say that she had encouraged this one.

Celia laughed a little.

"Don't look so frightened," she said. "It is all right. I only said what everybody says. I don't regret anything, you know. I don't wish I had married Paul—though his beard is certainly an improvement. But, good heavens, how we should have hated each other!"

"You used to take things more easily," said Mrs. Percival.

"Well, I am not in the habit of worry-

ing myself, even now. But there are limits, and Paul would have driven me beyond them—simply by expecting too much. He is so desperately critical too, and in that I think he has got worse."

"He is a very nice fellow," said Mrs. Percival.

"Oh, I know you were always fond of him. I thought it would make you happy, if I brought him back to-night—and Achille too; he shares your weakness. I knew that only one person would object, and he was not worth considering."

Mrs. Percival listened, and felt that she had nothing to say. But she did not quite like the tone of the allusion to Vincent; and it incited her to make a small effort at independence.

"I have hardly spoken to Vincent yet," she said. "Would you send him up to me, when you go downstairs? You have quite monopolised him this summer, Celia."

Celia, cool and calm as ever, looked at her with a smile. "He likes being here," she said. "Yes, I know—I have told him that Woolsborough will be jealous. But I shall not send him up to you to-night, dear, because you look tired, and it will be very bad for you to talk any more. There will be plenty of time to-morrow. Here's Timms; now I shall say good-night."

"I shall not sleep," muttered Mrs. Percival; but the charming Marquise did not hear. She lingered to say a word to Timms, who felt uncomfortable, and answered gravely. Then she gave her aunt a little kiss on both cheeks, and disappeared. White dress, fair face, red-gold hair, eyes a little sombre as the smile died out of them, she glided along the dark polished corridor, and down the broad stairs to the salon, still occupied only by Vincent and the "Figaro."

Mrs. Percival did not sleep. Perhaps the deep silence, deeper than anything possible in England, only varied in ghostly fashion by the owls that hooted now and then in the moonlight, had something to do with her restlessness. Then she was wearying her brain to think what she could do, what she ought to do, in these difficult circumstances. It would be so easy to exaggerate, to make things out worse than they were; for, judging from outward signs, it seemed that M. de Cernay in his warnings—which it was impossible to mention—had certainly exaggerated. At any rate, it was plain that Achille de

Montmirail had no idea of complaining to his wife's relations, whatever his secret griefs might be. And Celia did not betray herself, except by those heartless and ungrateful words about a mixed marriage. They were hardly enough to found a serious lecture upon; and besides—a lecture to Celia!—who could or would undertake such a task? Vincent was not a promising subject, either, but his mother felt that she absolutely must say a word to him to-morrow.

Another person who did not sleep that night was Paul Romaine. He got up and went out in the very early morning, while the avenue and all the lower ground were full of mist, just beginning to be gilded, and to shine dazzlingly in the light of the rising sun. He wandered about the old yards, the wild walks through grass and wild flowers and young chestnut woods, which led mounting up towards the vineyards, all hung with purple bunches, and silvered with dew. It all seemed to him like a sort of fairy-land. He, too, like Mrs. Percival, was dreaming; especially when Di and Jack joined him, knowing an old friend, and ran with him through seas of soaking white grass, while the sun rose higher, and colours began to glow, and the world became more brilliant every moment. The sky was clearing into blue, the tints of the trees were almost dazzling, jewelled all over as they were, and beginning, some of them, to turn yellow and red after the long hot summer. Above them all, above old white walls, flowers, shadows, colour, the high vanes of the chateau, with all their flashing gilded points, pierced the blue.

Paul walked down towards the avenue, and there, between seven and eight o'clock, he met two figures coming up out of the misty valley. They were not the first people he had seen, for work was going on already in the vineyards and about the farm.

But these were of a different sort, being the Marquis de Montmirail and his daughter coming back from early mass in the village. The church bells were even now ringing, Paul did not know why; he felt strangely excited, and as if he had been carried into some ideal world, as he met these two, and wished them good-morning, and was suddenly struck with a sort of likeness between them, different as they were. He could not afterwards remember what it was; but he did remember the tenderness, the nobleness of Antoinette's eyes, childlike as they

were, and his feeling of being unworthy to meet them. He remembered, too, another feeling, which did not seem unreasonable: a wish to do something hard for these two, to fight for them; they had somehow, that morning, the look of creatures too noble to defend themselves.

"I wish you were a Catholic, my friend," said the Marquis, in his straightforward way. "You might have been with us this morning. Do you remember our talk one Sunday on a hill—the first day we ever met?"

Paul smiled. He could not echo the Marquis's wish, yet, somehow, it vexed him at that moment to be reminded of any barrier between himself and his foreign friends. Yes, he was an outsider, an alien, after all. For years past he had felt himself divided from Achille de Montmirail, because of the marriage with Celia; now that division had ceased to exist, for Celia was unworthy of regret. Yet, as he stood there in the golden morning shadows, keenly conscious of the sweetness of Antoinette's eyes, he felt himself embarking on such seas of difficulty as he had never even dreamed of before.

They strolled slowly to the top of the avenue, and stood there for a few happy minutes, talking, looking down over the meadows. The Marquis laid his hand on Paul's shoulder, and leaned on it a little. As he talked, his daughter watched him, and Paul was aware of every change in her face. There came to him a mad wish then and there to kneel down at her feet, and say:

"It was your will that I should come here. What is the next word that you will give your servant to do?"

The day before, Paul had felt sufficiently old, cynical, and world-worn. Now he felt triumphantly that he was only twenty-eight; though he would have been startled to see Antoinette in a pinafore. But the experiences of that summer had given her more than a few weeks of age; she was as innocent, true, and loving as ever, but she would never again be a child.

Presently the Marquis left them suddenly and went off with long strides across the courtyard, past the front of the slowly-waking château, disappearing in an arched doorway beyond. Antoinette gazed after him as long as he was in sight; then she clasped her hands, shrugged her shoulders, and sighed, "Mon Dieu, mon Dieu!" with an accent of intense vexation. She flushed a little, then turned pale and frowned.

"Is there anything that vexes you?" Paul ventured to ask, for the girl made no attempt to hide these signs of feeling.

"It is my poor father," she said.

"Mademoiselle, you are not the only person who loves your father," said Paul, after a pause.

"Ah, si! You don't know—of course you don't think so. But he knows—what am I saying?"

"Nothing at all. Don't go away! I only meant that I love him too. I might be able to help, somehow—tell me, why did you look so anxiously after him just now?"

Paul stood and looked down at the girl, speaking very low; and just then, in his voice, look, and manner, there was something of which very few people would have believed him capable, something the like of which poor little Antoinette had certainly never seen before. The charm was irresistible. Paul knew by instinct that he had committed himself for ever, while her dark eyes fell, and a wave of colour crimsoned her young face. What would have been the sentiments of her grandmother, Madame de Ferrand, who thought no girl ought to know of love's existence till after she was married! For a moment they both stood still, as foolish as two young lovers in a play; then Antoinette was the first to recover herself.

She lifted her head a little proudly, looking in the direction that her father had gone, with eyes resolved to show no consciousness of anything new or wonderful.

"He is gone into the chapel to pray," she said.

"Why not?" said Paul softly. "I know he is a very good man."

"Yes—he is indeed—but do not you see anything strange in it, monsieur? He was always good and religious, but he did not always pray at all hours, like a saint. He will not go anywhere now; he would not go with us to Tours yesterday, and Suzanne says he was in the chapel nearly all day. And now you see, we have just come from mass. Surely le bon Dieu could not expect him to pray again now!"

Paul could not smile—he did not even feel the inclination to do so—at the girl's anxiety and her odd way of expressing it.

"I see what you mean," he said. "Is it long since he took to it—since you noticed the change in him?"

"A few weeks. But don't you agree with me? Don't you think he is changed too?"

"He seems graver than he used to be. But that happens to us all as we grow older, you see."

"Yes, but it is not that. Papa would never have changed, if he were happy. Well, it was at Trouville. He did not like being there, this year—and one day he went out for a walk with our friend, M. de Cernay, and came in quite strange. He seemed to have taken things into his head—about me, too—and I am afraid I vexed him—" Antoinette spoke very low, blushing again, and with drooped eyelids. "After that he spent half of his time in the church, and there seems to be a sort of fog between him and the rest of us—though he knows I love him—oh, how much!"

Paul stood looking at her in silence for a moment. Then he said, his voice hardening slightly: "Have you said anything to Madame de Montmirail about this? Has she noticed it too? But of course she has," he added quickly.

"I don't know," said Antoinette.

Paul watched her with the intensest pity and indignation. He knew that her confidence in him could go no further; the shadowy trouble which was oppressing her could not be put into words—unless—but he pulled himself together, and remembered where he was, who she was, everything. He felt rather a hopeless fool, however, as he muttered the only suggestion he could think of at the moment.

"We must try to keep your father as cheerful as we can. There's the shooting to-day."

"Yes. If I may ask, monsieur—will you do me a great favour?"

"You have only to say what it is, mademoiselle."

"Will you stay with him all day, and take care of him?"

"I shall be very glad. I thought perhaps it would be something much harder than that."

"That will be a comfort to me," said Antoinette.

Paul wondered a little what train of ideas had made her ask him this. A sort of general anxiety about her father, he supposed.

He had half thought that she might say to him, "Send Captain Percival away;" that would have been a hard task—would be, for it must be done somehow, by some means, Paul felt, though he had not had the advantage of M. de Cernay's information.

His studies in the thoughts of Antoinette were interrupted by Suzanne, who came bustling down to tell her that her coffee was getting cold. Suzanne had been watching the tête-à-tête for several minutes, till she could bear it no longer; there was no limit, she found, to the insolence of these English gentlemen. But Paul was not conscious of her unfriendly looks. Antoinette asked him gently if he, too, was letting his coffee get cold, which reminded him of the fact that he had seen no coffee, and that his morning's walk had made him ravenously hungry. They walked up to the château together, Suzanne hurrying on before. Mrs. Percival happened to be peeping through her shutters, and wondered if young French ladies were allowed in these days to walk about alone with young men. Achille de Montmirail, bare-headed, his fair hair shining in the sun, came out from the dark chapel doorway, and joined them on the terrace. To Paul there seemed a curious light about his brow and eyes; he might have been some knight of old time, who had seen the Holy Grail.

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